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Media Considerations For the Operational Commander

by

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Operations Department.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

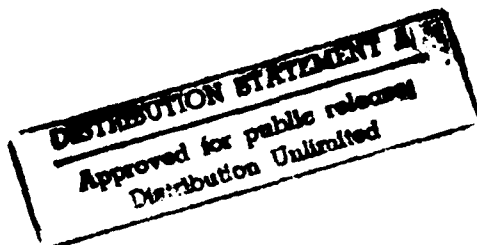
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19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) THIS PAPER EXAMINES THE NECESSITY FOR MEDIA COVERAGE OF U.S. MILITARY OPERATIONS, THE GROUND RULES, AND GOALS A MILITARY COMMANDER CAN ACHIEVE WITH GOOD MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONS. IN TWO CONFLICTS THIS DECADE, GRENADA AND PANAMA, THE PRESS GAVE MORE COVERAGE TO THE INEFFECTUAL MILITARY-MEDIA PLAN THAN TO THE SUCCESSFUL MILITARY OPERATIONS. THE MEDIA PLAYS AN INTEGRAL PART IN HOLDING TOGETHER CLAUSEWITZ'S TRINITY OF PEOPLE-ARMY-GOVERNMENT. MEDIA SUPPORT IS THEREFORE A NECESSITY FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY TO CONDUCT WAR. THE EVOLUTION OF GROUND RULES FROM VIETNAM AND GRENADA TO PANAMA HAS LED TO THE FORMATION OF THE DOD NATIONAL MEDIA POOL AND AN ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING OF POOLING IN GENERAL. THE POOLING SYSTEM HAS PROVEN TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD IN DEALING WITH THE MEDIA. POOLING WAS USED EFFECTIVELY BY THE MILITARY IN OPERATION DESERT STORM TO ACHIEVE STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL GOALS AND WILL BE THE BASIS FOR FUTURE MEDIA DEPLOYMENT. BUT EVEN WITH THE SUCCESS OF OPERATION DESERT STORM, MEDIA COMPLAINTS EXIST AND RULE MUST BE SHAPED DEAL WITH THEM. IN CLOSING, A WAR-FIGHTING COMMANDER CAN SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE HIS AIMS BY DEVELOPING A THOROUGH PLAN TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA.			
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Abstract of
Media Considerations For The Operational Commander

This paper examines the necessity for media coverage of U.S. military operations, the ground rules, and goals a military commander can achieve with good military-media relations. In two conflicts this decade, Grenada and Panama, the press gave more coverage to the ineffectual military-media plan than to the successful military operations. The media plays an integral part in holding together Clausewitz's trinity of people-army-government. Media support is therefore a necessity for a democratic society to conduct war. The evolution of ground rules from Vietnam and Grenada to Panama has led to the formation of the DoD National Media Pool and an enhanced understanding of media pooling in general. The pooling system has proven to be the most effective method of dealing with the media. Pooling was effectively used by the military in Operation Desert Storm to achieve strategic and operational goals and will be the basis for future media deployment. But even with the success of Operation Desert Storm, media complaints exist and rules must be shaped to deal with them. In closing, a war-fighting commander can significantly enhance his aims by developing a thorough plan to deal with the media.

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INTRODUCTION

Most Americans will agree that Operation Desert Storm (ODS) was a tremendously resounding and popular success for the U.S. military. Seven months after the end of the war public support for the military was only surpassed by the support immediately following the war.¹ Who could not applaud at seeing Patriot missiles racing skyward to intercept an incoming SCUD, cockpit video from Navy and Air Force jets hitting their mark with pinpoint accuracy, TOMAHAWK cruise missiles flying down the streets of Baghdad, or the Marines practicing amphibious operations? The indelible scenes of USS Wisconsin's 16 inch guns pounding Iraqi forces, anti-aircraft fire lighting up the Baghdad sky, the destruction on the "Highway of Death", and hundreds of thousands of surrendering Iraqi's were beamed around the world nearly instantaneously. Americans will not forget the television scenes of the world's first live war.

America had new heroes. GEN Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff(CJCS)-cool, prophetic and intelligent-was touted as a Vice-Presidential candidate by the press. GEN Norman Schwarzkopf, CINCCENT and war-fighting commander, barrel chested heir apparent to John Wayne, was expected to receive a fifth star or the Congressional Medal of Honor. Pete Williams, LGEN Thomas Kelly, and BGEN Richard Neal became fixtures on the nightly news and idols of many Americans. Was their popularity due to the media blitz or a by-product of an American victory? If a by-product, why can we not remember any of the heroes of American

victories in Operations Urgent Fury (Grenada) or Just Cause (Panama)?

The resounding success of the U.S.-led coalition forces resulted in an 85% approval rating of the U.S. military, the highest in American history.² However, even with the military's success, there was the usual howl and cry in the press about the military's performance concerning media coverage.

Members of the media maintain that the military's media policy was a total failure. The heads of fifteen news agencies, in a letter to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, declared that military control of the media "... should not be allowed to happen again."³

Did the military make a conscious effort to restrict media coverage? Eighty three percent of the American public agreed with military limits placed on the press, while 84% approved of the media's coverage of the war.⁴ In light of such overwhelming popularity and extensive first hand media coverage, questions naturally arise. Did the military in fact control the media? Was there censorship? Will it be done in the future? Certainly the old adage "don't mess with success" comes to mind. However, as the media reacts to lessons from ODS, military-media relations must evolve to meet the challenges of the next conflict.

This paper will not focus on press coverage of the gulf war. It will examine whether or not a war-fighting CINC and his staff, henceforth collectively referred to as the commander, must support the media. The paper will also discuss how a commander

can shape media relations and what can be gained by doing so. Because ODS was such an overwhelming success, much of the planning, coordination and operation will naturally serve as a model for future conflicts. Just as the military hopes to repeat the successes, it must also correct the mistakes and above all understand the actions that led to those successes and mistakes.

A media policy which results in real time television coverage from the battlefield, air bases, an American enemy's capital, or ships at sea can create problems for the government and the military. Public sentiment may wane, security of U.S. military endangered, strategic planning divulged, or enemy propaganda broadcast. By using the media wisely, these disadvantages can be overcome. Public support may be bolstered, confusion over strategic plans perpetuated and enemy propaganda countered.

This paper maintains that a commander must establish a definite plan of action for media relations. He must maintain control of the media and their products while allowing as much access as possible. By doing this, the commander can utilize the media as a weapon to defeat the enemy and maintain public support at home. This paper will examine: 1) The need for the media in conflict and their right to be there; 2) What the rules for the press coverage are and why these rules evolved; 3) Should press access be controlled or should a commander allow open access to the operation; 4) What the commander can hope to accomplish through the press; and, 5) What some of the future rules and potential problems with media relations might be.

IS MEDIA PRESENCE NECESSARY?

Few in the military would disagree with LGEN Trainor's statement that "the credo of the military seems to have become duty, honor, country, and hate the media"⁵ There is a common belief among many military officers that the media was a contributing factor to the loss of Vietnam. This belief stems from a feeling that the media maintained a negative focus on the war and the extensive coverage of the anti-war movement turned the American public against the military effort. The media maintains they presented an objective view of the war and the mood of the American people at the time. From these views alone, it is understandable that mutual mistrust is going to exist in military-media relations.

The chasm in military-media relations is not simply due to the Vietnam war. A Lichter/Rothman study in 1980 and 82 found 70-80% of the media to be generally liberal ideologically and that the military was equally conservative.⁶ The military's conservative nature expects the media and the public to inherently trust the government. Additionally, the military feels they are putting their lives on the line for their country and do not understand why the media is broadcasting its disapproval across America. Because the media presents an ideologically liberal view, it follows that they are largely anti-establishment and anti-war. While the government is not pro-war, it views war as a legitimate albeit undesirable way to achieve political ends

and the military is the instrument to accomplish those ends. These different points of view perpetuate the adversarial relationship between the military and the media.

Most journalists will argue that the people's "right to know" is implicit in the First Amendment and should prevail over all other rights. The media also feels that "right to access" is linked to "right to know" because without access to information the public can not be informed. Conversely, military officers hold that the concept(right to know) is not in the Constitution⁷ "and that the nation's right to protection should prevail in combat."⁸ The people's "right to know" is a concept that is controversial and has been the subject of countless articles and books. MGEN Sidle stated in his report on media relations, "the right to know" is a matter for the legal profession and the courts..." to decide.⁹ In many cases, the courts have determined that the public does have the "right to know," but the media does not have the right to unlimited access. Accordingly, the "right to know" will not be debated. The important question becomes whether there is a need for media coverage of military operations. If a case be made that media coverage is a necessity, some degree of access must naturally follow.

Carl von Clausewitz in his book *On War* bases his theory of war on the trinity of people-army-government(figure 1.).

The passions that are kindled in war must already be inherent in the people, the scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army, but the political aims are the business of the government alone.

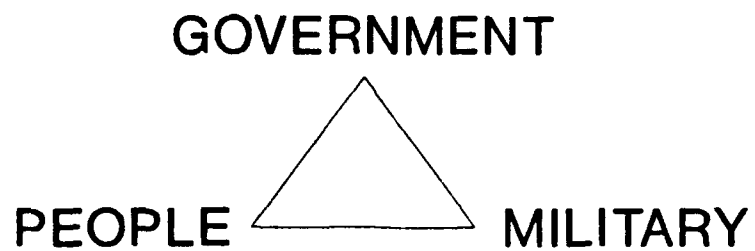


Figure 1. CLAUSEWITZ'S TRINITY

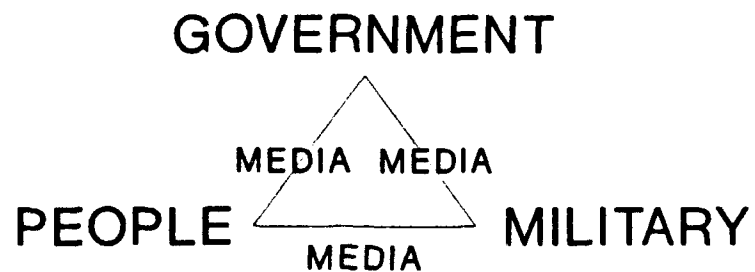


Figure 2. SUMMERS' MODEL

These three tendencies are like three different codes of law, deep-rooted in their subject and yet variable in their relationship to one another. A theory that ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be totally useless.¹⁰

Ideally, the government establishes the policy and provides the direction. The military provides the means to support the policy and follow the direction. The people support the policy and the military's actions.

As war escalates in violence and intensity it becomes less the province of the government sending the military away to fight a war and more a national effort. Former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, learning a lesson from Vietnam, reiterates Clausewitz in stating what is known as the Weinberger Doctrine.

...before the US (government) commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress.¹¹

Where does the media fit into this trinity? Harry Summers in his article "Western Media and Recent Wars" states "...the media in western democracies evolved as the link that holds the trinity together"¹²(figure 2.).

If the media is viewed as a mouthpiece, Summers' theory can certainly be true. The government establishes a policy and uses the media to communicate it to the people. The people, voice their opinion through the media and Congress. If the people disagree loud enough, policy or personnel changes can be made. A case can be made that Lyndon Johnson's decision not to run for reelection was due to a loss of public/media support concerning

the conflict in Vietnam. The same parallel can be made of GEN Charles DeGaulle's rise to power as a result of the unpopular conflict in Algeria. As simply a link, the media is a necessity for the government and the military to maintain public support.

However, the media is more than a mechanism for the trinity to communicate. In fact, the media is an entity unto its own, the center or soul of the trinity (figure 3.). But while each leg of the trinity has inherent faith in the others, the media is inherently entropic in nature trying to push the trinity apart. A concerted effort must be made to keep the trinity together.

The entropic nature of the media is evident in the Vietnam war. While the media initially supported the conflict, this soon gave way to a negative focus on the war. Describing out of context media coverage in Vietnam, Barry Zorthian wrote, "the anxiety, desire, and intensity of the media focusing on the most dramatic, seeking the greatest impact, dismissing the subtleties, qualifications and limitations required, gave what was essentially a distorted impression."¹³ Even though many Americans supported the government and military actions, this view was not equally covered and caused the trinity to become unglued. The media caused friction between the people, the government, and the military and the result was a failed effort.

In ODS the trinity succeeded in holding itself together although the media again tried to push it apart. Initially the press covered a preponderance of views against the conflict. "The Center for Media and Public Affairs found that in the months

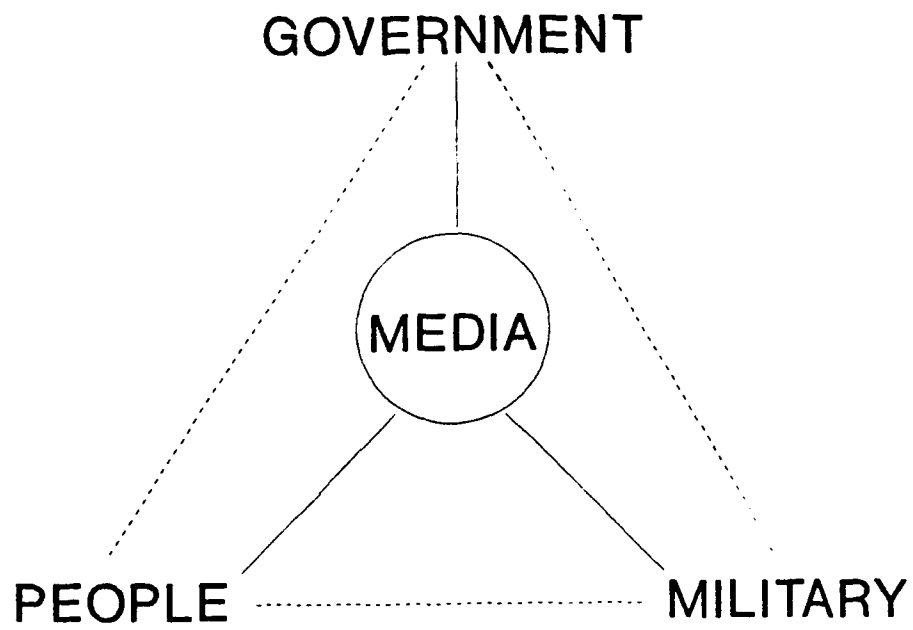


Figure 3. MEDIA AS THE SOUL

leading up to the conflict, the networks quoted opponents of the president far more often than advocates."¹⁴ However, the media focus was overcome by the overwhelming world-wide consensus and strength of public support. The military's adversarial relationship with the media is not essentially bad. However, because of the media's role the Weinberger Doctrine becomes an essential precursor to conflict. The commander must remember that the media is necessary in a democratic society's ability to wage war. By obtaining media support, public support for the war effort can be maintained and the trinity strengthened.

EVOLUTION OF THE GROUND RULES

Understanding that the media is important, the commander must establish ground rules for media presence in theater. The rules for media access have evolved just as war and the media have evolved and directly impact on military-media relations.

During the Crimean War the Duke of Wellington complained that "the babbling of the English newspapers from whose columns the enemy constantly drew the most certain information of the strength and situation of the army."¹⁵ During the Civil War President Lincoln suppressed more than 20 newspapers by jailing editors who were sympathetic to the southern cause. In both World Wars the American press had free access to the battlefield, however their reports were censored by the military. President Roosevelt actually hand picked the reporters who were to accompany the troops into the theater of war. The reporters

therefore understood they were part of the war effort and not an opponent of the government.¹⁶ The government was concerned about the influence of the media and used their power to control it. With the information explosion of the 20th century and the advent of the television the media became more influential.

The conflict in Southeast Asia was the first time war was brought into the American living room and the media exerted its power of influence. In Vietnam, the media essentially roamed free. There were certain units where they were not authorized, but for a large measure there was open access. Additionally, the media was allowed to attend the military briefings given daily in Saigon. The media, small in number (only 417 max and mostly from foreign countries), were treated better than any previous conflict in the realms of access, logistical support, transportation, personal comfort, and amenities.¹⁷

The military felt the media's coverage of the war, adversely affected public opinion at home. This bred a feeling of mistrust toward the media by the government/military. To counter the media, the military continually painted an optimistic view of the progress being made in the war. Military press releases were not accurate and the daily briefings were considered the "Five O'clock Follies." Lack of openness by the military, and the surprise of the Tet offensive caused the media to present a negative slant, as described by Barry Zorthian, on American progress of the war which eventually polarized the public.

The ignominious pullout of U.S. forces and the fall of

Vietnam left both parties looking for a scapegoat and pointing fingers at each other. The point is not whose fault the Vietnam loss was; but that military-media relations were poor. Media coverage by itself was not responsible for the loss. Each leg of the trinity made serious mistakes and the entropic nature of the media exacerbated the problem leading to trinity dissolution. Unfortunately, the lesson learned by the government and the military was that media coverage of war had a negative impact on public opinion.

OPERATION URGENT FURY

The lessons of Vietnam had an important role in the next operation (Urgent Fury) in which the media played predominantly. Media relations got off to a bad start before the invasion when the White House denied knowledge of the operation. When Urgent Fury was made public, the cry from the media set off a furor that lasted longer than the operation itself. The furor set the tone that ensured the media would be overly critical and disbelieving of any information officially provided.¹⁸

The problem worsened when the on-scene commander, VADM Joseph Metcalf, III, denied press access to Grenada until the third day of the operation. Then, only a small DoD approved pool was allowed on the island and it was kept under military control. It was not until the fifth day that free and open access to the island was allowed. The decision to keep the press out was a determined effort on the part of the military to prevent adverse

public opinion. By, excluding the press the military could conduct the operation and tell America about it later.

The celebration of a quick U.S. victory, enhanced security in the Caribbean, and establishment of a democratic government in Grenada was overshadowed by the press' vocal complaint about their manipulation by the military. The controversy caused the media to flock to Grenada either through the military system or around it. The 360 accredited American journalists present was greater than any U.S. conflict up to that point. Exclusion from combat became the media's center of focus and ensured the operation as a whole received less than favorable coverage.

Military-media relations hit rock bottom. Luckily the operation was over quickly before the media uproar could influence public opinion. To explore the rift in military-media relations MGEN Winant Sidle convened a panel at the direction of CJCS GEN John Vessey Jr.

SIDLE PANEL

The Sidle Panel laid the groundwork for current military-media relations. However, it was not perfect. The panel needed to address two central questions: 1) Did the media have the right to cover U.S. military operations; and 2) If so, how much access should the media be given?

The initial panel was to include only military and major media organization members. Although offering to cooperate, the media unanimously declined the invitation, feeling it was

"inappropriate for media members to serve on a government panel."¹⁹ The panel instead consisted senior military PA personnel, retired media and representatives from schools of journalism. While the panel was experienced and professional, those who would have to abide by the recommended guidelines were not there to help craft them.

As stated earlier, the panel decided to leave the issue of First Amendment rights to the legal profession. From this issue they made one sweeping premise to guide their discussion. The panel believed that the U.S. media should cover U.S. military operations to the maximum degree possible consistent with mission security and safety of U.S. forces.²⁰ This statement of principle validated the media's importance, and answered the panel's first question. This principle was not arrived at arbitrarily. It expanded the military's guidelines for dealing with the media and acknowledged the stand taken by media organizations. But, while this premise established the media's right to be there, it left latitude for the operational commander to control the press and spawned a still-continuing debate on how much access the press should be given. With the media's right to cover the operation conceded, the panel was left with determining guidelines. The Sidle Panel recommendations are included in Appendix I. Only the key ones will be discussed here.

The first recommendation states that Public Affairs (PA) planning for military operations be conducted concurrently with operational planning. This recommendation ensures that PA

personnel are involved in the planning and can make plans for adequately handling the media. In Operation Urgent Fury, the decision to include the media was made after the operation had started. No decisions were made on how many media could be handled, how they would get to the island, and what they could see, or if daily press briefings should be held.²¹ Including PA in operational planning could have answered these questions.

PA coverage will vary with the type of operation. For the operation to rescue hostages in Iran, there should not be any press accompaniment. After-action press conferences and PA crisis contingencies would fulfill the military's duty to keep the American people informed.

The second recommendation created the DoD National Media Pool. The Pool would be made up of a selected group of media on call for that purpose and employed only when it was the only means of providing the media early access to the operation. The Pool would be as large as possible and employed for the minimum length of time. The Pool concept had two goals: First, develop a means where DoD could get media to an operation quickly and discretely. Secondly, provide the military commander the mechanism to control media movements until mission security and safety of U.S. forces could be assured. The Pool was intended only for use in remote areas without a local U.S. press corps, and for a short duration until more open access could be allowed.

Media representatives unanimously opposed the Pool concept. However, they agreed to abide by it if it was the only means to

allow early access to the operation. The basis for the objection was that in creating the pool, the media relinquished control of their movements to the military and that the military would "put on its best face" in determining what could be seen. Ideally, the press desires transportation to the operation and then free and open access to pursue their stories. While controlling their movements is seen, by the media, as a method of censorship, military commanders would disagree.

Media personnel are civilians and the operational commander has the responsibility for their safety. The control of movement in a combat area is a must. Twenty five percent of the casualties in ODS were due to friendly fire. It is difficult enough to identify own troop movements in combat. The addition of hundreds of journalists free-lancing in a combat area would certainly be disastrous. This is opposed to the inherent media belief that they should make their own determination on whether safety is a question. In fact, in a desire to be in the middle of an operation, the media has emphasized that correspondents accept the physical dangers of a military operation and suggest that their personal safety should not be a factor in determining their presence. While the media admits that their degree of access should be controlled by mission security and safety of U.S. forces, by acquiescing to a pool they have let the military determine the security and safety question.

The last recommendation concerns security. It states that the press should voluntarily comply with security guidelines

established by the military. Violations would mean exclusion of the correspondent concerned from further coverage of the operation. While many in the media are sensitive to security, not all are. Richard Halloran stated, "the press has published classified information in the past and will in the future. The classification system is almost a farce, is abused for political and bureaucratic reasons that have nothing to do with national security and breeds contempt."²² By maintaining control of the media, the commander can review media products, limit press access to sensitive areas and control the inadvertent release of classified information. The press can not be allowed to decide security issues alone. The desire for a by-line will inevitably lead to breaks in security that may threaten American lives.

In summary, the Sidle Panel suggested guidelines for media access to military operations. Military commanders should consider media in planning, pools should be used to get media to an operation quickly and discretely, and media access should be commensurate with security and safety.

OPERATION JUST CAUSE

While Operation Ernest Will (tanker escort) was the first use of the DoD National Media Pool, Operation Just Cause (Panama) was the first time a quick response deployment of the Pool was used to cover an actual combat operation. The Pool did not work well for a variety of reasons. The Pool deployed late, not arriving until the second day of operations; inadequate transportation

limited movement; access to combat areas was restricted; senior officer support was half-hearted; and support personnel did not respond to media needs.²³ While there was much debate over whether the operation was appropriate for the Pool or if on-location media should have covered it, the military had decided that media pooling was the way to control the media until the military situation could be stabilized. The growing number of media desiring to cover an operation from the onset had made this essential. In Panama, more than 800 media personnel eventually arrived on scene. This large number of journalists simply overwhelmed the available assets and limits had to be placed on their movement. As with Grenada, media displeasure produced a large number of unfavorable or incorrect stories that detracted from an otherwise successful operation.

The media uproar caused ASD(PA) to commission Fred Hoffman, DASD(PA), to report on media relations in Operation Just Cause. The recommendations (Appendix II) suggested that Secretary of Defense issue a policy directive stating official sponsorship of the Pool and require full support of it.²⁴

Shortly after the report, CJCS issued a National Media Pool Planning Requirement message to all CINC's and service chiefs. The message encompassed many of Hoffman's recommendations and required commanders to ensure media coverage was planned along with operational plans and recommended the following minimum actions on a not to interfere basis: 1) Daily briefings be held; 2) Access to combat/exercise operations with the goal of treating

pool reporters as members of units; 3) More access to command and staff personnel; and 4) Disperse media throughout combat areas to offer as wide a coverage as possible. This message was couched in a reminder of the role of the media and the necessity to keep the American public informed.

The guidelines set forth by the Sidle Panel, Hoffman report, and CJCS reinforced the necessity for media coverage of military operations. The DoD National Media Pool consists of approximately 16 members and operational commanders can easily accommodate all pool requirements. Where these guidelines fall short and where the commander must make plans, is how to control the media when pool coverage ends and open access begins.

OPERATION DESERT STORM

Few will deny the American success in ODS. Equally few can deny that it produced the most wide-spread and in-depth media coverage of a combat operation in American history. Yet the media felt that the military pool system in place for the conflict was an unmitigated disaster. For the military's part, ASD(PA) Pete Williams wrote in the Washington Post that press arrangements

were a good faith effort on the part of the military to be as fair as possible to the large number of reporters on the scene, to get as many reporters as possible out with the troops during the highly mobile ground war and to allow as much freedom in reporting as possible, while still preventing the enemy from knowing what we were up to.²⁵

From the beginning, the military worked diligently on a media plan that incorporated all the lessons from previous conflicts

and guidelines from the Sidle Panel and Hoffman Report. The DoD National Media Pool was quickly put in place and covered the initial troop build-up. The Pool was disbanded after two weeks and independent reporting to parent news organizations began.

The media relations plan was intended to do two things. 1) Ensure the American public knew why troops were being deployed; and 2) Maintain public support. The government took the lead in ensuring America knew why its troops were deploying. From the first press conference with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, President Bush made sure our position was clear. Through all the UN diplomatic efforts and building the coalition, the President kept the people informed every step of the way. The Weinberger Doctrine's emphasis was loud and clear.

For the military's part it followed suit ensuring the best use of public relations. Following strict guidelines to disallow unit size, capability and function from being released, unit movements were widely publicized. The Pentagon even flew 960 hometown journalists to Saudi Arabia to cover their local units. Human interest stories broadcast from the desert improved morale among the troops and their families. During this build-up period, the media gave a disproportionate amount of coverage to opponents of the governments actions, yet public support bolstered by the military's extensive public relations effort remained high.

A Joint Information Bureau (JIB) was established to coordinate media movements and process media products. Media personnel were allowed to move about based on their desires, the

ability of the units to support them, and the capability of the JIB to get them there. This did restrict some access, however, those reporters who desired to stay with units long term were allowed to do so. In fact more than 200 media personnel accompanied front line units on the first day of the ground war.

The tremendous number of media personnel in Saudi Arabia forced the military to reinstitute a pool system once the war began. Public support at home was high and by putting a clamp on movement the military could keep control of the media while maintaining as much open access as logistical capability and mission security warranted.

Each reporter, or pool of media, had a PA escort officer (EO). The EO was to coordinate movement and review media products for conformance to the established security ground rules. If reports were approved, they were sent to the JIB for transmission to parent news organizations.²⁶

Early on, the military established the guidelines for the release of information.

Reliable information will be made fully and readily available to the news media whenever possible. Information will not be classified or otherwise withheld for the purpose of protecting military organizations, units, or individuals from criticism or embarrassment. All news will be reported forthrightly as accurately and as expeditiously as possible.²⁷

Press briefings were conducted by knowledgeable, senior military officials in Saudi Arabia and Washington. The media was inundated with facts, figures and multi-media displays. The well orchestrated briefings placated the media and allowed the

military to "talk over the heads" of the media directly to the American people.

Even with the military's accessibility and candor, cries of foul were heard from the media. With an 83% approval rating by the American public²⁸ on media coverage of the war, its hard to accept these complaints as credible. Press complaints stem from two areas. The first was the media's belief that pooling does not work. The media felt the whole idea of the pool system is to keep press movement under control. This limited what the media saw and allowed the military to put a good light on the operation. This complaint stems from a self serving attitude on the part of the media. Each reporter wants unilateral access to every part of the operation whenever and wherever he wishes. With 1600 media in-theater, as during ODS, this is not feasible to accommodate.

Movement in combat areas, especially at night is tightly controlled and highly coordinated. The thought of two battalions of journalists roaming the desert at their whim is dangerous, chaotic and will lead to catastrophe.²⁹ This happened in ODS when a CBS news team struck out on its own and was subsequently captured by Iraqi soldiers. The logistics of supporting several hundred extra vehicles would significantly reduce the number available to the troops and hamper operations.

An alternative idea would be to station media personnel full time with units. This was done to a degree in ODS. This plan would allow media to cultivate relations with a unit, and ensure their presence when the action started. All reports would then be

transmitted to a larger pool in the rear. This concept could exacerbate the number of media present as larger news organizations desire to be with many units, especially popular front line troops. However, this could be overcome by making unit PA cells permanent, ensuring all units were covered, and restricting movement between units.

The second criticism was over the delay in transmission of pool reports from reporters in the field to the JIB. This is a valid complaint. It took some reports as long as a week to be delivered. The military agreed to provide transmission facilities to the media and must make provisions for several hundred media personnel to transmit their stories. Slow transmission of media products delays reporting of stories and leads to pool breakers who attempt to by-pass the system to meet deadlines.

The alternative to this would be to allow media to provide their own transmission equipment. While this solves the media's problem, it leads to larger ones for the military commander. The problem lies in security. EMCON conditions would be difficult to maintain with press transmitting stories whenever they wish. The other security issue is military review of media products for security violations. From a strictly technical aspect, if media can transmit on site to central receiving and broadcasting areas, a security review would be difficult. This is an essential issue the operational commander must address in the future as word processing and transmitting capabilities become better and allow the reporter to directly file stories from the field.

WHAT DID MEDIA COVERAGE ACCOMPLISH?

From the operational commander's viewpoint, media relations in ODS were a resounding success as statistics show. But what exactly was accomplished by the media blitz?

The first and foremost goal was to maintain support at home. There is no doubt this was accomplished. But the methods of doing so may not be so clear. From the beginning, American support was high. The media was initially skeptical, broadcasting anti-war movement news nightly. The high morale shown in unit send-offs, military wooing of the small hometown journalists and continuing human interest reports from the troops helped maintain public support. Once the conflict started, daily well orchestrated press briefings by open and credible senior officials inundated the media with a tidal wave of information and allowed the military to talk directly to the public. Midway through the war far fewer derogatory reports could be found. Obviously the military's faith in the American people was used to influence the media.

Significant success was achieved through use of the media in deception. The extensive coverage of the initial troop build-up made it seem larger than it really was.³⁰ Reports of unit deployments made it seem as if the whole unit had moved. In reality, only elements of each unit had been placed in the desert. This had a deterrent effect on Iraq's aggression and made the coalition seem like a bigger force than it was.

The second area was the feint produced by media coverage of the Marine's practice amphibious landing. Coverage of the

maneuver reinforced in Saddam Hussein's mind the Marine threat off the coast of Kuwait. This threat caused him to commit a significant number of troops to cover this contingency.

The media would never allow itself to knowingly publish such disinformation. If they had realized what they were doing in ODS, the uproar would have significantly hurt the U.S. effort. Nonetheless, these techniques employed during ODS were a major factor in the success. Without a doubt, Saddam Hussein watched CNN's coverage of the war and was effected by the optimistic assessments, technical wizardry and force strength.

THE FUTURE

The future holds many challenges for the operational commander. Technical advances make small lap-top word processing and transmission capabilities a certainty. Commanders must establish a firm policy controlling the use of these machines. Unrestricted use could seriously hamper mission security.

Even through media organizations lost millions of dollars in ODS, the next conflict will have a significant media presence, all attempting to quench their thirst for information on behalf of the American people. These large numbers require military control of the media to prevent the chaotic movement of thousands of people through the theater of conflict.

Even though unwarranted, the uproar caused by the extensive use of ODS media pools will ensure that the media come "better prepared" for the next conflict. They will have their own

transportation and transmission capabilities and will certainly create a loud cry for free access to the entire operation. The commander must have a JIB established, complete logistical facilities to transport the media, and improved communications procedures to ensure media products are processed quickly.

CONCLUSIONS

Media access to military operations is essential in a democratic society. The importance of public opinion is proved through history. Instantaneous broadcasting capabilities make the media's potential influence even greater. Commanders must establish a thorough PA plan to cover the entire media spectrum.

Operational and PA planning must be conducted together to ensure that professional PA personnel are prepared for the media onslaught. Public opinion support is a must. The American people inherently support their government and military. This support must be utilized to its maximum extent to overcome the inevitable media disapproval. Public support can be enhanced through candor and openness with the media. Bombarding the news with upbeat broadcasting of troop movements and human interest reports from the troops in-theater help overcome media bias.

In dealing with the media, pooling is a must. Control over the media movement must be established for security reasons with no loss of media access to the troops. Every reporter can not have access to every unit in a conflict. To attempt such access with several hundreds journalists would be dangerous and chaotic.

Small permanent media cells in each unit which could transmit reports to a central pool facility for distribution to all media allowing coverage of all aspects of the operation.

Daily briefings are a must for the military to establish its credibility. They improve support through the military talking directly to the public and keeping them informed. These briefings can also be used to implement deception and other psyop techniques.³¹

The media can not be expected to comply voluntarily with security regulations because they view classified material differently than the military. Specific guidelines concerning the type of stories allowed is a must for security reasons and safety of the troops. Use of escort officers as in ODS to provide on site review of media products will enhance the speed in getting reports out and can stop security violations on the spot.

Extensive logistic and communications systems must be established. The press will need to get to the theater of operation and to move around once there. They also rely on the military for transmission of reports. This system requires the forethought provided in early PA planning.

Media complaints over military control during operations will never go away. The commander must allow as much open access to the media as possible but the underlying duty is still for the security of the mission and safety of U.S. troops.

APPENDIX I

CJCS MEDIA-MILITARY RELATIONS PANEL (SIDLE PANEL)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1). That public affairs planning for military operations be conducted concurrently with operational planning. This can be assured in the majority of cases by implementing the following:

a. Review all joint planning documents to assure that JCS guidance in public affairs matters is adequate.

b. When sending implementing orders to Commanders in Chief in the field, direct CINC planners to include considerations of public information aspects.

c. Inform Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) of an impending military operation at the earliest possible time. This information should come from the Secretary of Defense.

d. Complete the plan, concurrently being studied, to include a public affairs planning cell in OJCS to help ensure adequate public affairs review of CINC plans.

e. Insofar as possible and appropriate, institutionalize these steps in written guidance or policy.

2). When it becomes apparent during military operational planning that news media pooling provides the only feasible means of furnishing the media with early access to an operation, planning should provide for the largest possible press pool that is practical and minimize the length of time the pool will be necessary before "full coverage" is feasible.

3). That, in connection with the use of pools, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend to the Secretary of Defense that he study the matter of whether to use a pre-established and constantly updated accreditation or notification list of correspondents in case of a military operation for which a pool is required or establish a news agency list for use in the same circumstances.

4). That the basic tenet governing media access to military operations should be voluntary compliance by the media with security guidelines or ground rules established and issued by the military. These rule should be as few as possible and worked out during the planning process for each operation. Violations would mean exclusion of the correspondent(s) concerned from further coverage of the operation.

5). Public affairs planning for military operations should include sufficient equipment and qualified military personnel whose function is to assist correspondents in covering the operation adequately.

6). Planners should carefully consider media communications requirements to assure to earliest feasible availability. However, these communications must not interfere with combat and combat support operations. If necessary and feasible, plans should include communications facilities dedicated to news media.

7). Planning factors should include provisions for intra- and inter-theater transportation support of the media.

8). To improve media-military understanding and cooperation:

a. CJCS should recommend to the Secretary of Defense that a program be undertaken by the ASD(PA) for top military public affairs representatives to meet with news organization leadership, to include meetings with individual news organizations, on a reasonably regular basis to discuss mutual operations and exercises. This program should begin as soon as possible.

b. Enlarge programs already underway to improve military understanding of the media via public affairs instruction in service schools and colleges, to include media participation when possible.

c. Seek improved media understanding of the military through visits by commanders and line officers to news organizations.

d. CJCS should recommend that the Secretary of Defense host at an early date a working meeting with representatives of the broadcast news media to explore the special problems of ensuring military security when and if there is a real time or a near real time news media audio-visual coverage of a battlefield and, if special problems exist, how they can best be dealt with consistent with the basic principle.

APPENDIX II

REVIEW OF PANAMA POOL DEPLOYMENT (HOFFMAN REPORT)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1). The Secretary of Defense should issue a policy directive, to be circulated throughout the Department and the Armed services, stating explicitly his official sponsorship of the media pool and requiring full support for it. That policy statement should make it clear to all that the pool must be given every assistance to report combat by U.S. troops from the start of the operations.
- 2). All operational plans drafted by the joint staff must have an annex spelling out measures to assure that the pool will move with the lead elements of U.S. forces and cover the earliest stages of operations. The principle should be incorporated in overall public affairs plans.
- 3). A Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs should closely monitor development of operation-related public affairs plans to assure they fulfill all requirements for pool coverage. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs should review all such plans. In advance of military actions those plans should be briefed to the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff along with the operation plans.
- 4). In a runup to a military operation, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should send out a message ordering all commanders to give full cooperation to the media pool and its escorts. This requirement should be spelled out unambiguously and should reach down through all echelons in the chain of command. Such a message should make clear that necessary resources, such as helicopters, ground vehicles, communications, etc.; must be earmarked specifically for pool use, that the pool must have ready access to the earliest action and that the safety of the pool must not be used as a reason to keep the pool from action.
- 5). The ASD(PA) must be prepared to weigh in aggressively with the Secretary of Defense and the JCS Chairman when necessary to overcome any secrecy or other obstacles blocking prompt deployment of the pool to the scene of action.
- 6). After the pool has been deployed, the ASD(PA) must be kept informed in a timely fashion of any hitches that may arise. He must be prepared to act immediately, to contact the JCS Chairman, the joint staff director of operations and other senior officers who can serve to break through any obstacles to the pool. The ASD(PA) should call on the Defense Secretary for help as needed.

- 7). The ASD(PA) should study the proposal by several of the Panama poolers that future pools deploy in two sections. The first section would be very small and include only reporters and photographers. The second section, coming later, would bring in supporting gear, such as satellite uplink equipment.
- 8). The national media pool should never again be herded as a single unwieldy unit. It should be broken up after arriving at the scene of action to cover a wider spectrum of the story and then be reassembled periodically to share the reporting results.
- 9). The pool should be exercised at least once during each quarterly rotation with airborne and other types of military units most likely to be sent on emergency combat operations.
- 10). During deployments, there should be regular briefings for pool newsmen and newswomen by senior operations officers so the poolers will have an up-to-date and complete overview of the progress of an operation they are covering.
- 11). There is an urgent need for restructuring of the organization which has the responsibility for handling pool reports sent to the Pentagon for processing and distribution. The ASD(PA) must assure that there is adequate staffing and enough essential equipment to handle the task. The director of plans, so long as he has this responsibility, should clearly assign contingency duties among his staff to ensure timely handling of reports from the pool. Staffers from the Administration Office, Community Relations and other divisions of ASD(PA) should be mobilized to help in such a task as needed.
- 12). The ASD(PA) should give serious consideration to a suggestion by some of the pool members to create a new pool slot for an editor who would come to the Pentagon during a deployment to lend professional journalism help to the staff officers handling pool reports. Such a pool editor could edit copy, question content where indicated and help expedite the distribution of the reports.
- 13). The pool escorting system needs overhaul as well. There is no logical reason for the Washington-based escorts to be drawn from the top of the ASD(PA) Plans division. The head of that division should remain in Washington to oversee getting out the pool products.
- 14). The ASD(PA) should close a major gap in the pool system by requiring all pool participant organizations--whether print, still photo, TV or radio--to share all pool products with all elements of the news industry. Pool participants must understand they represent the entire industry.

15). There is merit in a suggestion by one of the pool photographers that participating news organizations share the cost of the equipment, such as portable dark room and a negative transmitter, which could be stored at Andrews AFB for ready access in a deployment. Other equipment essential for a smooth transmission of pool products, such as satellite up-link gear, might also be acquired and stored in the same manner.

16). All pool-assigned reporters and photographers, not only bureau chiefs, should attend quarterly Pentagon sessions where problems can be discussed and rules and responsibilities underscored.

17). Public Affairs Officers from unified commands should meet periodically with pool assigned reporters and photographers with whom they might have to work in some future crises.

NOTES

1. Gallup Poll, 16 October, 1991.
2. RADM Brent Baker, USN, "Last One In The Pool...", U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, August 1991, p.71.2
3. Letter from Stan Cloud et al to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, 24 April 1991.
4. Baker, p.71.
5. LGEN Bernard E. Trainor, USA, "The Military and the Media: A Troubled Embrace", Parameters: Journal of the U.S. Army War College, December 1990, p.2.
6. James H. Webb Jr., "The Military and the Media," Marine Corps Gazette, November 1984, p.36.
7. Richard Halloran, "Soldiers and Scribblers: A Common Mission", Parameters: Journal of the U.S. Army War College, Spring 1987, p.13.
8. James F. Pontuso, "Combat and the Media: The Right to Know Versus the Right to Win", Strategic Review, Winter 1990, p.49.
9. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Sidle Panel Report, Washington, June 1984, p.1.
10. Carl von Clausewitz, On War, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1976), p.89.
11. Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power", News Release Number 609-84, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Washington D.C., 28 November 1984, p.6.
12. COL Harry G. Summers, USA "Western Media and Recent Wars", Military Review, May 1986, p.10.
13. Barry Zorthian, "The TET Offensive and Christmas Bombing as Case Studies", The Vietnam Debate: A Fresh Look at the Arguments, edited by John Norton Moore (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990).
14. David Gergen, "Why America Hates the Press", U.S. News and World Report, March 11, 1991, p.57.
15. Rupert Furneaux, The First War Correspondent, (London: Cassell and Co., 1944), p.4.

16. Pontuso, p.54.
17. CDR Drew Malcomb, USN, The Military Press Pool-Come on in the Waters HOT, (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College, 20 May 1991), p.11.
18. Ibid.
19. Sidle Report, p.2.
20. Ibid. p.1.
21. VADM Joseph Metcalf, III, USN, "The Mother of the Mothers," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, August 1991, pp. 56-7.
22. Halloran, p.22.
23. Malcomb, p.17.
24. Fred S. Hoffman, Memorandum for Correspondents: Review of Panama Pool Deployment, 20 March 1990, p.18.
25. COL John M. Shotwell, USMC, "The Fourth Estate as a Force Multiplier", Marine Corps Gazette, July 1991, p.78.
26. If a report was not approved, it was transmitted to the JIB where the JIB director and a media representative would try to come to a consensus. If none could be reached, the report would be transmitted to Washington where ASD(PA) and a senior editor would mediate the issue. If a consensus still could not be reached the report would be published. Of 1300 reports filed in ODS only 5 went to Washington. Four were published as is and one was changed because it dealt with intelligence collection.
27. Secretary of Defense message, Operation Desert Storm Release Authority, 171916ZJAN91.
28. Baker, p.71.
29. Shotwell, p.79.
30. Richard Zoglin, "It Was a Public Relations Rout To", Time, March 11, 1991, p.56.
31. This topic is not thoroughly discussed because it is an issue that is too lengthy and sensitive to be covered here.

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